

Colby Library Quarterly



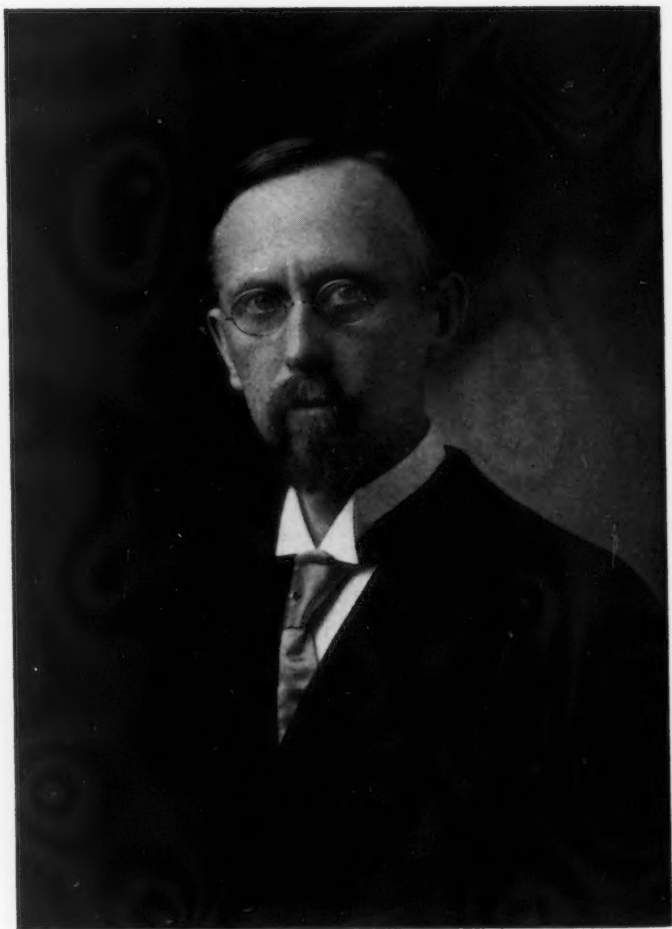
February 1954

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HARRY LYMAN KOOPMAN

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Colby Library Quarterly

Series III

February 1954

No. 13

A NEGLECTED COLBY POET: HARRY LYMAN KOOPMAN

By CARLIN T. KINDILIEN

HIS instinctive interest was in the intellectual concerns of his time": thus did the *Providence* (Rhode Island) *Journal* summarize the career of Harry Lyman Koopman whose life began in the little Maine shipping town of Freeport during Lincoln's first presidential campaign and ended over three quarters of a century later as the nation emerged from its greatest depression. One of America's foremost librarians, Koopman had devoted most of his crowded hours to the craft of books, but he was ever a faithful student of the literary, political, and scientific movements of the day. A great university library took form under his direction; nearly a dozen volumes of poetry earned him a place in America's literary scene; a distinguished New England newspaper sought his pen for its editorial page; and several colleges and universities honored his scholarship and his humanity: there is indeed ample cause for retracing the steps of Harry Lyman Koopman—an explorer of many byways of American thought in one of the nation's most vital periods. There is particular cause for the graduates of Colby College to recall the career of an alumnus whose devotion to free inquiry and to the discovery of truth must reaffirm their own faith in the liberal arts tradition.

Near the end of his life, Koopman wrote an autobiographical article for a Portland newspaper to accompany a tribute piece to his beloved Mount Desert Island where he

passed many of his summers.¹ Really an unabbreviated *Who's Who* account, the statement itemized the factual record and left the reader to restore the full portrait of a most remarkable New Englander. Behind the names and the places and the dates is the story of a man who was absorbed in the New England that one associates with Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Emily Dickinson. Koopman awakened early to the regional heritage that was reflected in his parentage—his father was a farmer and a ship joiner; his mother, a descendent of one of the earliest settlers of Duxbury, Massachusetts. After his graduation from the Freeport High School, Koopman entered Colby College in 1876, the same year in which his first piece of writing—a poem written the year before—was published in the *Portland Transcript*. Confirmed in his love of books by new reading experiences and new associations, Koopman responded with a series of tribute poems to his college. In his contributions to *The Colby Echo* and finally in a commencement poem, he began what was to be a lifelong pleasure and duty: to thank Colby College for its key to a vocation and an avocation.

Koopman had experimented with school teaching while he was an undergraduate at Colby, and after his graduation in 1880 he accepted several teaching positions before deciding upon a career in library work. Before the day of professional library schools, he served his apprenticeship at the Astor Library in New York and successively, as cataloguer, at Cornell, Columbia, and Rutgers. From 1886 to 1892 he was at the University of Vermont where he first earned scholarly distinction for his bibliographical study of the private library of George Perkins Marsh.² He spent the academic year 1892-93 at Harvard working for a Master of Arts degree: at the end of his life he recalled the classes with Francis Child and George Lyman Kittredge

¹ *Portland (Maine) Sunday Telegram*, January 24, 1937.

² Harry Lyman Koopman, *Catalogue of the Marsh Library at the University of Vermont*, Burlington, 1892.

and remembered the Yard where he saw President Eliot, John Fiske, Charles Eliot Norton, Nathaniel Shaler, William James, and Josiah Royce. In 1893 Brown University called him to Providence to take charge of its John Hay Library. Both as Librarian and Professor of Bibliography for the next thirty-odd years (he retired in 1930), Koopman served the university and American scholarship with skill and imagination. Under his direction, the John Hay Library grew from 80,000 to 400,000 volumes, but, characteristically, Koopman took more pride in the fact that he had innovated open shelves for students. During these years he added to his reputation as essayist, poet, and scholar with a series of publications that reflected his manifold interests. He brought out a historical catalog of Brown University, became a specialist in printing, edited the Brown alumni magazine for a dozen years, contributed articles on *Lincolnia*, and found time to write several books of poems.³ Scholarship was the key to his lifelong activities, but for this defender of the full and free life there had to be a time to admire the New England that Thoreau had analyzed and apotheosized, a time to climb its hills and mountains, and a time to enjoy its ocean and its sky. After his retirement from this librarianship, Koopman joined the staff of the *Providence Journal* and wrote daily editorials that found their core in the New England that he had studied and loved for half a century.

The qualities of Harry Lyman Koopman that most impress a student of American thought are his critical awareness and his intellectual honesty. His life's work had brought him in contact with the greatest minds and he was ever sensitive to the necessity of freedom of thought and speech. His distaste of literary censorship was publicized

³ Harry Lyman Koopman, *Historical Catalogue of Brown University*, Providence, 1895; *The Mastery of Books*, New York, 1896; *Handbook of the Library of Brown University*, Providence, 1910; *The Booklover and His Books*, Boston, 1917; *Lincoln Letters, Hitherto Unpublished in the Library of Brown University*, Providence, 1927. See footnote 5 below for a complete listing of Koopman's poetry.

in 1929 when he balked at a government order that was to forbid the importation of certain volumes of classical literature, among them Voltaire's *Candide*. Koopman angrily spoke out in behalf of the mature reader:

Every college in this country will have to "shut up shop" if this continues. Every self respecting citizen should revolt against being classified as an infant, a baby which is exactly the classification being assigned to him, as a reader, by those who are responsible for this censorship.

We are being made the laughing stock of every European nation. If these books are going to be banned, they ought to go through with it and bar the Old Testament. It contains passages to which customs officials must find objections if they apply the same standards of judgement by which they have been guided in the past.⁴

It is such an attitude that saves a number of Koopman's poems from the limbo of "the genteel tradition" under whose influence he began his creative work. There are obviously many phases of Koopman's work which are attractive to students of the American mind: this article will concentrate on his place in the American literary scene as determined by his several volumes of poetry and his critical work. Koopman published over a dozen collections of verse during his lifetime, an assortment of poetry that included the best and the most regrettable features of the metrical offerings of the period which he embraced.⁵ He began writing verse during the 1880's at a time when American poets found their themes in the "household editions"

⁴ Quoted from the *Providence (Rhode Island) Journal*, December 29, 1937, p. 10.

⁵ Harry Lyman Koopman, *The Great Admiral*, Ithaca, 1883; *Orestes, a Dramatic Sketch and Other Poems*, Buffalo, 1888; *Woman's Will: a Love-Play in Five Acts, With Other Poems*, Buffalo, 1888; *The Crime of the Culprit Fay: Introductory to Drake's Poem*, Burlington, 1890; *The Gothic Minster*, New York, 1891; *Morrow-Songs: 1880-1898*, Boston, 1898; *The Miller of Fort St. Frederic*, Providence, 1904; *At the Gates of the Century*, Boston, 1905; *The Librarian of the Desert and Other Poems*, Boston, 1908; *Hesperia: an American National Poem*, 2 vols., Providence, 1919; *The Guerdon: a Poem*, Providence, 1921; *The Clerk of Breuklyn*, Providence, 1924; *The Narragansett Country*, Providence, 1927; and *Materna*, Waterville, 1930.

of Longfellow and Whittier, their settings in Tennyson's rose garden, and their stanzas in the miniature forms of the French poets. The pattern of his aesthetic was set out early and followed down to his final collections. The hasty reader will put aside these volumes with the remark that they are the typical production of a part-time poet; a few readers will be grateful for the intellectual strength which marks not a few of his many poems. Like so many American—and English—poets, Koopman would profit from a highly selected edition of his poetry. In the meantime, one may grasp the character of his verse from his best volume—the *Morrow-Songs* which appeared in 1898—and a few other works which came out during the 1890's. The poetry of this decade is particularly pertinent as a background for Koopman's verse, for under the stimulus of the forces that were reshaping so many parts of the American life, Koopman wrote his most interesting lines.

The poetry of the 1890's can tell a reader much about the New England mind as it entered the modern world. The decade was a troubled one in the economic and political life of the region, but New Englanders generally looked confidently and optimistically to the new century that held, they believed, the answers to their worries about religion, democracy, and industry. Not so the poets of New England. There was little talk among them of twentieth-century cure-alls: the idea of progress had been carried on to a new frontier in the West. The old school of poets continued to smile at the "new decade" and to ridicule the necessity of any change in the old ways. Most of the younger poets saw that some changes had to be made, but they were agreed in their respect for traditional values. They were skeptical and despairing in much of their expression, but along with Edwin Arlington Robinson they saw that a new faith had to take the place of the lost one. The rediscovery of spiritual values and personal faiths was their achievement. Their common tone was a perplexed one, but their final mood was one of affirmation. The ideals, the traditions, the

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expressions of their predecessors in America and Europe were called up anew by the best of the New England poets in an attempt to create a philosophy and an aesthetic which would be meaningful to the modern world. This willingness to reëxamine the past was the characteristic that separated New England poetry from that of the other regions of America during the 1890's. In such a devotion to self-analysis the poets were not merely reflecting the background of the Puritans; they were concerned with finding the values upon which a new society would rest, and they were trying to establish a place for themselves, as poets, in a society that was turning more and more to men of fact.

Among these New England poets, there was no one more sensitive to a heritage nor more aware of how it might be used to awaken men to a new faith than Harry Lyman Koopman. And there are many more justifications for a critical reappraisal of his achievement. We search for a New Englander who frankly spoke his own mind about the problems of the day, and we find that Koopman did; we hope for a poet who felt the significance of the poetry of Emerson, Thoreau, and Emily Dickinson, and we find that Koopman was the poet; we know that there must have been some writers who knew the value of irony and satire, and we discover that Koopman was one of them. Such characteristics sanction his inclusion among the important poets of the era. The intellectual content of his poetry is its prime justification, but even in this early period of Koopman's writing career there are enough revelations of a poet's regard for language and form to warrant a closer study.

His first book in this decade, *The Crime of the Culprit Fay* (1890), an experiment in poetic fantasy reminiscent of J. R. Drake's imaginative poem of an earlier day, gives little indication of his later interests. *The Gothic Minster*, published in 1891, introduces a representative theme: the passing of the old order, symbolized in a dying church, and the promise of a new world built with "light and life and love." Ac-

cepting Ruskin's concept of a cathedral as a varied symbol of the exaltation of common lives by the union of faith and art, Koopman leads his reader rather gingerly to the observation that "Men build no more cathedrals." The beauty of the old cathedrals served as a link between the human and the divine, but the day when religion was the "mastering motive" of men's lives has passed. Man's art and work have been divorced; faith "is dead on earth, never to live again." Until this point in the poem, the reader's reaction has been conditioned by the tone and mood which implied the poet's regret at the loss of the old faith. But the mood changes with the assertion that indeed the old faith is gone, for "light slew it":

That faith is dead which made the earth a waste,
And man's life but a desert pilgrimage
O'er burning sands and flinty shards to find
Beyond its bounds a Paradise and rest.⁶

Some people, he continues, may regret the disappearance of the creative geniuses who were inspired by the old faith, but their efforts did not balance the pessimism which weighed down the mass of men. Even now, the poet feels the "dark influence" of religion and urges man to a "bold research in room of cringing awe." The new religion requires no man-made symbols of the unseen, churches of stone; civilized man needs only the lessons of humanity and a willingness to play his part in order to defy dread and hope.

By the time that Koopman collected his early poems in *Morrow-Songs*, the Christian Church and its priests were established in his mind as the forces which retarded man's progress. He ridicules the idea of a progressive church:

The Church advances; to each new position
Man's marching spirit takes she hobbles fast,
Asserting shrill the hour she finds admission,
That here she had her home through all the past.⁷

⁶ Koopman's "The Gothic Minster" was reprinted in *Morrow-Songs*. The quotation is from this volume, p. 15.

⁷ Koopman, *Morrow-Songs*, p. 41.

and he scorns the office of the priest:

At Bruno's, Lessing's, Rousseau's monument
Priests glower aloof, their sullen spite to vent
Against those Sons of Dawn; for well they wot
When priestcraft dies its memory shall rot.⁸

Civilization, he affirms, can advance only when man has outgrown law ("custom armed"), custom ("that levelling instinct of the commonplace"), and righteousness ("the cramped cocoon | Wherein man's soul bred wings"):

Then love shoots forth, fragrant and white, from lust,
As from its root in mud the water-lily.
Man's long, long term of barbarism ends,
Civilization and true life begin.⁹

Working most easily in the quatrain, Koopman wrote a poetry at this time which relied chiefly on his combination of literary language and modern idiom. His best poetry was in the manner of the classicists who sought an effect in restrained and concentrated expression; it was the poetry of a long distillation of reading and observation. His imagery was bookish, but its reflection of the wide reading of a liberal mind saved it from conventionality. The alternation of standard similes and metaphors with a colloquial diction gave many of his poems a quality novel enough at the end of the century. A satire, "The Outlook (By a Conservative)," made clear his ability to fuse common language and social commentary in one of the few ironical poems of the decade.¹⁰ Koopman could be as traditional as the commonplace poet in his choice of subject and in his technique. Such a poem as "The Wail of the Wounded," which reviews the aftermath of Gettysburg, was in two-thirds of its images a kind of catalog of stock figures of speech and was relieved only by the final view of "that landscape of wounded men."¹¹ In a few poems, even when his form was stereotyped, Koopman showed some insight in his selection

⁸ Page 42.

⁹ Page 50.

¹⁰ Pages 34-37.

¹¹ Page 45.

of native material for treatment. A sonnet tribute to John Brown was one of the few recognitions received by the man who was in the process of becoming an American myth.¹²

In December, 1896, Koopman wrote a critical article on the poetry of Emily Dickinson and became one of the few writers of the decade to take notice of America's finest woman poet. Writing at the time of the appearance of her third volume of poems, Koopman did much more than merely notice her; he recognized a "rare and striking genius" and predicted that she would "hold a place in any list of the great woman writers of the world, and in any list of the great poets of her own country."¹³ Koopman's analysis of Emily Dickinson's poetry was amazingly modern in its study of the four influences which inspired her revolt: her heredity, her sex, her solitude and reading, and the "same recoil from Puritanism that appears in Emerson and Thoreau." Finding the key to her form in her reaction to traditional verse forms, Koopman acknowledged the influence of Browning but found a greater similarity to the poems of Emerson and Thoreau ("there are passages that are almost interchangeable"). Emily Dickinson, he concluded, was "a freethinker, but a free thinker on puritan premises." The poetry of Emily Dickinson appeared too late for Koopman to assimilate it in his own expression during these years; yet, even in this early volume there are tones and methods which he shared with her if he did not inherit them. The skeptical tone, the condensed forms and imagery, and especially the attitudes of his verse frequently remind one of Emily Dickinson's. His lines on "Dust" are close to the spirit of her poetry:

Satanic Science, to reveal
A speck of dust the snowflake's core!
Well, bravo, dust! If you could steal
Angelic plumes, we'll mope no more.¹⁴

¹² Page 21.

¹³ Harry Lyman Koopman, "Emily Dickinson," *The Brown Magazine*, December, 1896, p. 82.

¹⁴ *Morrow-Songs*, p. 72.

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A freethinker in his own right there was more intellectual honesty in the *Morrow-Songs* than a reader could find in a hundred books by the average poets of the day. The college library was no safe retreat for the mind of Koopman: he read far beyond the bibliographies of his trade; he thought his own thoughts about some of the real problems of his age; and he expressed himself in poetry which fulfilled its purpose of communication. Too often, perhaps, he fell back on the poetry of the past for his language and his images, but frequently he made his poetry a testing ground for the actualities of life. Skeptic and idealist, satirist and sentimentalist, traditionalist and modernist, Harry Lyman Koopman was finally an intellectual who was beginning to sense at the end of the century that the road out was the one traveled by the great poets of his own region: Thoreau, Emerson, and Emily Dickinson. The qualities of this poetry were the qualities of the man: the man who was so well characterized by a fellow editorial writer at the time of his death: "Dr. Koopman was a philosopher as well as a student. His sympathies were broad and based on careful reflection. He was a generous estimator of others' opinions but a faithful adherent to his own basic convictions. He was a kindly critic and a generous-minded friend. All in all, he lived a rounded life and a happy one. The State and community to which he gave unsparingly of his strength and affection will long remember him for what he did—and for what he was."¹⁵ Colby College, in like manner, will remember with pride the "strength and affection" which Harry Lyman Koopman reserved for his *alma mater* and the example which his life affords of a liberal education in action.

¹⁵ From an editorial in the *Providence Journal*, December 29, 1937. This quotation also appeared in *The Colby Alumnus*, March, 1938.



A LETTER FROM MRS. HUMPHRY WARD
TO VERNON LEE

By HILDA M. FIFE

University of Maine

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD (1851-1920) knew everybody of any importance; and everybody, of importance or otherwise, knew Mrs. Humphry Ward. Granddaughter of Dr. Arnold of Rugby; niece of Matthew Arnold; wife of Thomas Humphry Ward, Fellow and Tutor of Brasenose College at Oxford, journalist on the *Times*, and lecturer; and aunt of Aldous and Julian Huxley—Mary Augusta Arnold Ward was in a position to meet most of the outstanding Victorians and their twentieth-century descendants. Her intellect, her personality, and her concern for others drew people of all kinds to her. Portraits and photographs show her as a lovely girl and a beautiful woman. Associated intellectually and socially with the academic and religious leaders at Oxford, she participated in discussions and in literary arguments which led eventually to the writing of the religious novels for which she is best known. Yet she never neglected her career as Mr. Ward's wife and the mother of three children. Furthermore, she found time and energy to devote to social service, and was responsible for the establishment of a settlement house, of playgrounds, and of special schools for crippled children in the city of London. And during World War I, when she was approaching sixty, at the suggestion of Theodore Roosevelt and with the coöperation of the British government, she visited war plants, naval vessels, and even the battlefields to collect material for three books that would show Americans, in particular, how all England was working to win the war. A remarkable woman, Mrs. Humphry Ward—rather too brilliant and sure of herself to appeal to some, but certainly deserving of respect and admiration for her varied accomplishments.

A list of the famous people Mrs. Ward knew would be long, ranging through royalty, clergy of many faiths, writers, publishers, artists, and statesmen, and limited in no way by nationality or geography. Among the Americans, for example, were Henry James (an especially congenial friend), Sarah Orne Jewett and Mrs. Annie Fields, Edith Wharton, and Theodore Roosevelt. It is not surprising to find that Mrs. Ward and Violet Paget knew each other, for they had various characteristics and interests in common: brilliance of intellect, beauty of person, devotion to both scholarly and imaginative writing, love of Italy, acquaintance with many of the authors of their time. There is only one letter from Mrs. Ward to Miss Paget in the Colby collection, but the informal tone of it suggests an acquaintanceship of some duration. Unfortunately, neither Mrs. Ward in her autobiography, *A Writer's Recollections* (1918), nor Mrs. Trevelyan in her biography of her mother, *The Life of Mrs. Humphry Ward* (1923), mentions Vernon Lee. Mrs. Trevelyan refers to a journal kept by Miss Gertrude Ward, but this seems not to be available to the public in either written or MS. form; it would perhaps reveal more details of the relationship between the two correspondents.

The letter shows Mrs. Ward as possessed of human weaknesses like the rest of us. A definite reason for writing—to introduce Miss Wakefield—has spurred her to pen a long overdue answer to a letter from Miss Paget; she has, of course, a good reason for being so remiss in her correspondence. She starts a paragraph about Miss Paget's book, but in the second sentence slips to the subject of Mrs. Ward again, where she stays until she politely brings Miss Paget back into the paragraph in the last sentence.

61, RUSSELL SQUARE [London].

17 February 1884.

Dear Miss Paget,

I have been a long time answering your letter, but I

know you will allow my disabled arm¹ to be an excuse. It is so difficult to get through one's work and correspondence when everything has to be done by dictation. I was the more anxious to write to you soon because a friend of mine, Miss Wakefield, has gone to Florence and was anxious to see you. I promised her I would write to you, and I only hope this letter may find you as soon as she does. You may have heard of her as a most charming amateur singer; she is a connexion of mine and we are very old friends. I am sure you will like her: she is a most vigorous, energetic and delightful creature.

I was much interested in what you told me of Anna Meyer; it is indeed a sad story, and I find it often very hard to realize when I look back upon what she was as a school-girl.

I am looking forward to your book; I hear that the essays it contains are most interesting and—if I may say so—show an advance on your previous work.² I am inclined to envy you your powers sometimes, for with weak eyes and two disabled arms it is almost impossible to do any satisfactory work. Have you seen Amiel's "Journal Intime"?³

¹ "Early in 1883 she began to suffer from a violent form of writer's cramp, which made her right arm almost useless at times, and recurred at intervals all through her life, so that writing was usually a far more arduous and painful process to her than it is to most of us. Through the years 1883 and 1884 she was frequently reduced to writing with her left hand, but she also dictated much to her young sister-in-law, Gertrude Ward, who came to live with us at this time, and became for the next eight years the prop and support of our household." Janet Penrose Trevelyan, *The Life of Mrs. Humphry Ward*, p. 43.

² *Euphorion: Studies of the Antique and the Mediaeval in the Renaissance*, which was published in London in 1884, or *Belcaro: Essays on Sundry Aesthetic Questions*, published in London in 1881. If it is the latter, "your previous work" would be *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, published in London in 1880.

³ *Journal Intime*, edited by Edmund Scherer, French critic and friend of Amiel (1821-1881), appeared in 1882. It was a careful and loving selection from thousands of pages of a journal kept for thirty years by the Swiss philosopher and mystic—a record of "his various occupations, and the incidents of each day . . . his psychological observations . . . the impressions produced on him by books," and the "confidant of his most private and intimate thoughts," as Mrs. Ward tells us in her introduction. Amiel wrote in his native French, which was, however, strongly marked by his years of study and thinking in German; in fact, one critic accused him of attempting "to write German in French." The translation of such a work was no easy task. Mrs. Ward's version, prefaced by an

He is one of the small class of Introspectives which has a great attraction for me. I am very busy with a translation of his book just now and an introduction; and I am also reading a good deal of Modern Spanish literature, on which I hope to have an article in the Quarterly for April.⁴ But dictating is as yet a great burden. Have you ever tried it?

Mary Robinson⁵ seems better but not yet strong. I suppose she never really is. Mrs. Robinson talks of her taking cold easily and being soon overtired. She spent a night with us not long ago, after having been to see Miss Anderson, the new London "rage," at the Lyceum.⁶

Believe me

Very sincerely yours

MARY A. WARD.

This letter is like Mrs. Ward's *Recollections*, which is more

introduction of thirty-odd pages, became the standard English edition of the work, the one used by Matthew Arnold in his essay on Amiel that did much to stimulate interest in the philosopher.

⁴ A forty-page article reviewing seven works of Spanish literature and criticism, ranging from 1852 to 1883, appears in the July, 1884, issue of *The Quarterly Review*.

⁵ In the early 1880's when Violet Paget was visiting England (she lived with her family in Florence, Italy), she stayed at the home of Mary Robinson, a young woman of her own age and of similar tastes. In 1881 Miss Paget dedicated *Belcaro* "To A. Mary F. Robinson." Miss Robinson had already published a book of verse, *A Handful of Honeysuckle* (1878), and was at work upon a novel, *Arden* (1883). During a period of fifty years she wrote poetry, fiction, and biography in both English and French. She is represented in *The Library of Congress Catalogue of Printed Cards* (1943) by over twenty titles. Among these is *An Italian Garden: A Book of Songs*, an edition of which, limited to 925 copies, was published by Thomas B. Mosher in Portland, Maine. Her last two books, *A Portrait of Pascal* and *The Life of Racine*, were published in America by Harpers in 1926. She was married twice, each time to a man outstanding in his own field: James Darmesteter, an Oriental scholar, and Pierre Émile Duclaux, director of Pasteur Institute in Paris. Search to date has revealed no information as to her death or her present whereabouts.

⁶ Mary Antoinette Anderson (1859-1940) was a beautiful and popular American actress who was noted especially for her Shakespearean rôles. In 1883 she opened at the Lyceum in London in *Ingomar, the Barbarian*, by Maria Lovell, having chosen to play Parthenia in that play (rather than Juliet) as "the simplest character in my *répertoire*, and one in which I could not challenge comparison with any English favorites." Mary Anderson, *A Few Memories*, pp. 135-136. Her success was immediate, and she played this and other rôles to overflowing houses for nearly eight months. She went on tour through the provinces and Ireland, and then had a second season in London, during which she played Juliet a hundred nights. W. S. Gilbert wrote *Comedy and Tragedy* especially for

about herself than about her famous friends—to the annoyance and distress of several of the reviewers of the book. But one is not justified in carping at such self-interest; in what better place can an author write about herself than in personal letters or in an autobiography?



HARDY'S LETTERS

Reviewed by DAVID PATTERSON

IN a recent book on Shelley, the author remarks: "Our deepest crimes . . . and our best actions . . . are not as a rule the things we record in letters. . . . Hardly anyone quite fails to lie in some degree in every letter that he writes. Letters are fascinating and indispensable tools for scholars, but they are not *all* of scholarship. For one man with the genius for self-revelation of Van Gogh, we have a thousand with the talent for self-concealment that literary men in general possess" (Ivan Roe, *Shelley*, London, 1953, page 11).

No reader of this book of Hardy's letters* will fail to recognize that, while he quite obviously had no "genius for self-revelation," he was singularly free from the "self-concealment that literary men in general possess." He was no actor. Hardy was honest and sincere; he said what he really believed, and his letters contain none of the "small talk," the flippant jests, the straining after rhetorical effect, and none of the petty gossip, the political dia-

her. In 1889 she retired from the stage, married Antonio F. de Navarro, whom she had long known, and settled in England.

Mrs. Humphry Ward's first novel, *Miss Bretherton* (1885) "was suggested to me by the brilliant success in 1883 of Mary Anderson, and by the controversy with regard to her acting—as distinct from her delightful beauty and her attractive personality—which arose between the fastidious few and the enchanted many." Mrs. Humphry Ward, *A Writer's Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 15.

* *The Letters of Thomas Hardy* transcribed from the original autographs in the Colby College Library and edited with an introduction and notes by Carl J. Weber; illustrated. Waterville: Colby College Press, 1954; \$5.

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tribe, or the fanciful ravings that often make the letters of other men interesting. As Professor Weber notes in his introduction, Hardy the letter-writer shows no trace of Hardy the novelist, the man who created such amusing rustics. Hardy the letter-writer makes no attempt to *entertain*: his correspondents found in his letters none of the acrobatics of a Charles Lamb letter and none of the intimacies of a Thackeray communication.

These letters are, then, largely factual and likely to interest the Hardy "fan" more than the general reader. Although the present volume contains only those letters by Hardy which have found their way to the Colby College Library, and although this is admittedly a chance gathering rather than a carefully guided and rational selection, the book does contain letters written to a surprisingly large number of important people. Here are the names, for example, of Sir James M. Barrie and Sir Edmund Gosse, of Sir Frederick Macmillan and Lord Curzon, of publishers like Henry Holt and Harpers, of Frederic Harrison and Artist Abbey, of Editors Shorter and "Jack" Squire—and others! This book is therefore full of information, and some of it of a most unexpected sort: for example, the account of Maurice Evans's debut upon the stage—as a Wessex shepherd boy in a "Hardy play"! Fortunately, wherever Thomas Hardy has not made himself wholly clear to the modern reader, especially the American reader, Hardy has been ably assisted by the researches of his editor. Professor Weber's notes not only inform but correct previous errors. For instance, he amends Mrs. Hardy's mistaken view of Hardy's attitude toward his "Satires." The printer has arranged both the letters and the notes in a most agreeable way on a beautifully printed page. The illustrations all help, too. This book will prove an indispensable "tool" for future Hardy scholars, and its editor has greatly lightened the labors of some future compiler of a definitive collected edition of Hardy's correspondence.



FROM FLORENCE TO COLBY
BY WAY OF KANSAS

WHEN HENRY JAMES called on Violet Paget in Florence in the spring of 1887, he found her living at No. 5, Via Garibaldi, with her mother and her half-brother, Eugene Lee-Hamilton. His was a tragic case. After receiving an Oxford education, Lee-Hamilton had entered the Foreign Office and at the time of the Franco-Prussian war he was attached to the British Embassy in Paris. In 1873, however, he suddenly collapsed with paralytic symptoms, and for the next twenty years he was a prostrate invalid. He took to writing poetry and developed not a little skill as a sonneteer. Several books of his poems were published, and the list of those who wrote sympathetic reviews of his work includes the name of Edith Wharton.

In the fall of 1889 some of Eugene Lee-Hamilton's poems—"several selections in a poetry magazine"—attracted the attention of Miss Florence Snow in Kansas. She wrote to him; he answered from Italy. She wrote a sonnet to him; he replied with a sonnet of his own, "To Florence Snow," which he included later in his book entitled *Wingless Hours* (1904). He mailed copies of autographed books to her. Then, having made a miraculous recovery, Eugene Lee-Hamilton found himself able to travel. In the early summer of 1897 he came to Toronto, Canada, and accepted an invitation to brave the August heat of Kansas. He spent several days with Florence Snow and her niece, Lydia Sain, and later published some reference to "Kansas woods a year ago." He died about a dozen years later.

Miss Florence Snow treasured her memories of the poet from Italy and of his visit in 1897, and in 1940 she wrote it all down. Her account of Lee-Hamilton eventually made Chapter VI of a book, *Pictures on my Wall: A Lifetime in Kansas*, by Florence L. Snow (Lawrence, Kansas, University of Kansas Press, 1945), a copy of which has now, through the kindness of Professor John E. Hankins, been

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presented to the Colby College Library by Miss Sain (the author's niece). Chapter VI (pages 105-122) is entitled "In Regard to Eugene Lee-Hamilton." We are happy to be able to add this record of his visit to Kansas to the file of his papers and books which have come to Colby by way of England.



OTHER RECENT ACCESSIONS

FROM F. N. Fletcher, of the Class of 1882, we have received a copy of *A Sentimental Journey* "by Mr. Yorick" (published in Glasgow in 1803). Probably none of our readers need any identification of "Mr. Yorick," for Laurence Sterne's famous book has recently celebrated its sesquicentennial.

From Miss Jeannette W. Payson, of Portland, we have received an eight-volume set of Shakespeare (all edges gilt), with many fine engraved illustrations.

From Mrs. Harriet C. Sprague we have received a set of *The Lark* (with most amusing contents), a copy of the facsimile edition of Whitman's 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, and various other welcome publications. In addition to the complete set of *The Lark*, Mrs. Sprague has given us various odd issues of the same publication, with interesting bibliographical "points," autographs, variant imprints, etc., etc.

From Mrs. N. N. Wallack, of Alexandria, Virginia, we have received an extensive file of letters, manuscripts, proofs, and other material, by and about Margaret Deland. These letters and manuscripts constitute a most appropriate supplement to the Deland Collection given to Colby by the late N. N. Wallack.

From other sources the Library has received four letters of Willa Cather, dealing with her London call on the poet A. E. Housman (publication of these letters is forbidden by Miss Cather's will); an autograph manuscript by Edna

St. Vincent Millay—of her poem "Exiled" (longing for the coast of Maine); and ten autograph letters of Beatrix Potter (dealing, not with her own books, but with the Hardy Collection of Rebekah Owen).

From Mrs. Charles Gibbs, '17, of Pleasantville, New Jersey, we have received a venerable copy of *The Life of Baron Trenck*, translated from the German by Thomas Holcroft (Boston: Thomas & Andrews, 1793). This book was printed by Peter Edes.

Books sometimes reach the library in masqueraders' disguise, reminding us from time to time of a line by a famous native of Maine to the effect that "things are not what they seem." A recent acquisition illustrates the truth of Longfellow's remark. When Mr. Benton Hatch of our Catalogue Department examined the pages of a newly received volume, it purported to contain Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Baltimore: W. Pechin, 1800) together with Jefferson's 1801 *Inaugural Address* (Baltimore: W. Pechin, 1801). Mr. Hatch's alert eyes detected, however, a number of pages in the book that were obviously *not* in the type of the Baltimore printer, and after a nice piece of detective work he was able to demonstrate, in spite of the absence of the title-page, that the masquerader was *A Message of the President* [George Washington] . . . to Congress relative to France and Great Britain. These pages reproduce correspondence of Thomas Jefferson while Secretary of State and include the official account of the famous Genet affair. One of the pleasing rewards of Mr. Hatch's research was his discovery that this *Message* was printed in Philadelphia in 1795 for our old friend Mathew Carey, and it now becomes a very welcome addition to our Carey Collection, to which we devoted a number of pages in our issue for January 1944. This interesting volume is the gift of Senator Scott Simpson, in memory of Grace Wells Thompson (Colby '15).

To our collection of books and papers by Jacob Abbott, author of the famous *Rollo* books, we have recently added

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a delightful letter written from Farmington, Maine, on January 6, 1871, to Abbott's son Lyman, then on the editorial staff of *The Christian Union*.



ANOTHER "TORRENT" TURNS UP

SEVEN years ago, in an article on "The Jubilee of Robinson's *Torrent*," we printed (in our issue for February 1947) a list of fifty-six extant copies of this famous little blue-wrapped "book." In August 1947 we were able to add three more copies to the list. During the year 1948 we located three more: No. 60 in our issue for February, and Numbers 61 and 62 in the August issue. Numbers 63 and 64 were added to the list in May 1949, and then "silence fell." Throughout 1950, 1951, 1952, and 1953, we became increasingly afraid that no more than sixty-four copies had survived. But now Mr. Rowland Baughman writes to inform us that Copy No. 65 has arrived in the Columbia University Library. This copy was presented by the poet to the late Jefferson B. Fletcher and bears on the title-page the autograph inscription: "J. B. Fletcher | with compliments of E. A. Robinson | 10 December, 1896." Fletcher's name does not appear in the list of recipients of copies of the *Torrent* which we printed on page 3 of our issue for February 1947, and that list can now be extended, accordingly, beyond the total of 112 names to whom Robinson is known to have sent copies of his work. From that same issue we learn that the copy sent to J. B. Fletcher was accompanied (on December 10, 1896) by copies sent to G. W. Edwards, G. E. Heath, G. S. Lee, Thomas Bird Mosher, Charles Eliot Norton, and Fred N. Robinson (Harvard professor, no relation to the poet).

If any of our readers are able to help us to extend this list of extant copies of *The Torrent* still further, any information about them will be gratefully received.



EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON



COLBY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

THIS ORGANIZATION was founded in April, 1935. Its object is to increase the resources of the Colby College Library by securing gifts and by providing funds for the purchase of books, manuscripts, and other material which the Library could not otherwise acquire.

MEMBERSHIP is open to anyone paying an annual subscription of five dollars or more (undergraduates pay fifty cents, and graduates of the college pay one dollar annually during the first five years out of college), or an equivalent gift of books (or other material) needed by the Library. Such books must be given specifically through the ASSOCIATES. The fiscal year of the ASSOCIATES runs from July 1 to June 30. Members are invited to renew their memberships without special reminder at any date after July 1.

Members will receive copies of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY and notification of the meetings of the society. Officers for 1953-1954 are:

President, Frederick A. Pottle, Yale University.

Vice-President, Lester E. Weeks.

Student Vice-President, Carol L. Bullock.

Secretary, F. Elizabeth Libbey, Acting Librarian.

Treasurer, Miriam Beede.

Committee on Book Purchases: Norman S. Smith (term expires in 1954), Anna L. Dunham (term expires in 1955), and (*ex officio*) the *Vice-President* and the *Secretary*.

Program Committee: Carl J. Weber, *Chairman*, and (*ex officio*) the *Vice-President* and the *Secretary*.

Editor of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY: Carl J. Weber.

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